

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

August 13, 2020

The Honorable Kim Reynolds
Governor of Iowa
Iowa State Capitol
1007 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50319

Dear Governor Reynolds,

As your office works to manage a natural disaster on top of COVID-19, I am writing you to offer my assistance and support for upcoming efforts to request a federal disaster declaration to unlock federal assistance to respond to the derecho that tore through Iowa and the Midwest on Monday, August 10th, 2020.

The storm that slammed our state on Monday was quick moving, leaving very limited time for residents to prepare. The National Weather Service (NWS) initially did not believe the impending storm would be this powerful, a hallmark trait of derechos. However, the derecho quickly became violent and aggressive; the winds and rains of the derecho were so powerful that 43 percent of Iowa's corn and soybean crops were damaged. The storm left a path of damage that stretches over 700 miles from Nebraska to Indiana, and its path of destruction was visible from space.

As the Congresswoman for Iowa's 3rd Congressional District, I represent hundreds of thousands of Iowans who were impacted by this storm. Many residents from Polk, Dallas, and other counties in the Third District have reached out to my office – and I've spoken with local mayors and county emergency managers to keep up with the updated damage and power outage estimates. My heart is broken for these communities that have seen collapsed buildings, mangled crops and agricultural infrastructure, widespread debris and downed trees, and lost electricity. Even now, days later, many still do not have their power restored, and many farmers are only beginning to survey the long-term impacts from crop and property damage.

I stand with you and your team and urge expeditious assessments that would enable you to request a federal disaster declaration from President Trump and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). When that request is finalized, I am prepared to use the voice of my office to echo that request, and I will urge my congressional colleagues to do the same.

At such time as you may make that request, I also urge you to impress upon the President that our financial ability to recover is weakened by shrinking budgets as a direct result of COVID-19. In Congress, I have continued to fight for COVID-19 economic funding for our smaller cities and counties because I was worried that unexpected financial burdens like this might occur, leaving our areas with limited ability to provide immediate assistance. The President has been

opposed to more financial assistance for small cities and rural states like ours. I believe that you can help the President and his Administration understand that financial assistance is necessary; without it, we are trying to help Iowans recover from flooding, COVID-19, and now a derecho with one hand tied behind our back.

I will continue to work here in Congress for state assistance, as well as work closely with federal agencies to ensure relief and support arrives quickly. If there are specific funding accounts that Iowans need to access, but are limited by red tape, I will also fight to remove those barriers.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this letter and our state team's work to assemble the data necessary to support any federal request for aid.

Your fellow Iowan,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Cynthia Axne". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Cynthia" and last name "Axne" clearly visible.

Cindy Axne
Member of Congress